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3.3.3 Psych verbs

Psych verbs denote a psychological state. This class consists of verbs such as *a uimi* ‘surprise’, *a speria* ‘frighten’, *a iubi* ‘love’, *a supăra* ‘make angry’ and of the equivalent verbal constructions such as *a(-i) fi* ‘be’ + noun (*a-i fi teamă* ‘be afraid’, *a-i fi rușine* ‘be ashamed’), that can be paraphrased by “have the psychological state / the emotional feeling of...” (Manea 2001: 26).

3.3.3.1 Psych-verbs show a **strong correspondence** between the semantic representation and the syntactic structure. Psych verbs have an “Experiencer” slot in their thematic grid, which can be lexicalized as subject (1a-b), direct object (2), or indirect object (3) (*experiencer-subject constructions* vs. *experiencer-object constructions*, Crystal 2008: 396).

- (1) a. **Câinele** se sperie de lumină
‘The dog fears the light’
b. **Ea** adoră parfumurile
‘She adores perfumes’
- (2) Insuccesul **îl** deprimă
‘Failure depresses him’
- (3) **Îi** convine situația
‘The situation suits him’

Some psych-verbs display **two forms**: the **transitive** entry is causative, whereas the **reflexive** one is decausative – *a bucura* ‘make happy’ vs. *a se bucura* ‘enjoy; be happy’, *a înfuria* ‘make somebody furious’ vs. *a se înfuria* ‘grow furious’, *a îngrijora* ‘make worry’ vs. *a se îngrijora* ‘become worried’. Either the stimulus (4a) or the Experiencer (4b) can appear in subject position. Semantically, the two patterns differ in what concerns the focus placed on either the quality of the Stimulus or the state of the Experiencer:

- (4) a. Stimulus as subject
Pericolul mă sperie
‘Danger frightens me’
Povestea îl amuză
‘The story amuses him’
- b. Experiencer as subject
Eu mă sperii de pericol
‘I fear danger’
El se amuză de poveste
‘He is amused by the story’

In Romanian, as also in other languages, the desiderative verbs *a vrea* ‘want’, *a dori* ‘wish’, *a prefera* ‘prefer’, *a spera* ‘hope’ allow the Experiencer in subject position; this feature may be explained by the fact that a mental process such as the one expressed by the verb *a vrea* ‘want’ is perceived, irrespective of culture, as originating with the person who experiences it (Talmy 2007: 138).

In the semantic domain of cognitive processes, a great number of verbs allow the Experiencer in subject position – *a crede, a gândi* ‘think’, *a(-și) imagina* ‘imagine’, *a se îndoii* ‘doubt’, *a ști* ‘know’, whereas others, less numerous, allow the Stimulus in subject position – *a contraria* ‘vex’, *a uimi* ‘astonish’, *a șoca* ‘shock’. There are verbs which can appear in both patterns – *a se mira* ‘wonder, be surprised’ functions as Experiencer-subject verb, whereas *mira* ‘astonish’ function as Experiencer-object verb.

The stimulus is lexicalized as subject (5) or as prepositional object (6). In some cases, the Stimulus may remain syntactically unexpressed (7).

- (5) a. **Singurătatea** îl sperie
‘Solitude frightens him’
b. **Amintirile** îl întristează
‘Memories make him be sad’
- (6) a. El se teme **de boli**
‘He is afraid of maladies’
b. Ea se bucură **de întâlnire**
‘She is glad about the meeting’
- (7) a. Ion se bucură
‘Ion is glad’
b. Maria se întristează
‘Maria becomes sad’

Ⓒ In Romanian, similarly to other Romance languages, the verbs with two lexical entries, i.e., reflexive and transitive, allow the Stimulus to be lexicalized both as subject and as object (4). English seems to favor lexicalizing the Stimulus as subject (Talmy 2007: 135): Engl. *This interests me, It pleases me*. Only for a few colloquial verbs (*like, want*) the Experiencer is coded as subject.

The Agent is lexicalized only for causative verbs expressing a controlled or controllable process:

- (8) a. **Mama** îl consolează
‘Mum comforts him’
b. **Colegii** o enervează
‘The colleagues annoy her’

The Theme may be coded either as subject (9a-b) or as direct object (10a-b):

- (9) a. Îi place **filmul**
‘(S)he likes the movie’
b. Îi convine **situația**
‘The situation suits him’
- (10) a. Ea adoră **filmul**
‘She adores the movie’
b. Ea **îl** iubește
‘She loves him’

3.3.2.2 The class of psych-verbs admit **various syntactic patterns**. They falls into several **syntactic subclasses**:

- transitive Experiencer-subject verbs – *a adora* ‘adore’, *a detesta* ‘detest’, *a iubi* ‘love’, *a crede* ‘think’, *a ști* ‘know’ (1b, 10) and transitive Experiencer-object verbs – *a stresa* ‘stress’, *a uimi* ‘astonish’, *a șoca* ‘shock’, *a contraria* ‘vex’ (2);

- verbs that can function either as reflexive or as transitive: *a (se) alarma* ‘be alarmed; alarm’, *a (se) amuza* ‘be amused; amuse’, *a (se) bucura* ‘be happy; make happy’, *a (se) consola* ‘console oneself; comfort’, *a (se) descuraja* ‘lose courage; discourage’, *a (se) enerva* ‘become annoyed; annoy’, *a (se) entuziasma* ‘become enthusiastic; fill with enthusiasm’, *a (se) înfuria* ‘become furious; make furious’, *a (se) mira*, *a (se) neliniști*, *a (se) plictisi* ‘become bored; bore’, *a (se) speria* ‘fear; frighten’ (4);

- intransitive verbs that do not require an obligatory pronominal clitic: *a deznădăjdui* ‘fall into despair’, *a dispera* ‘despair’ (11a), and intransitive verbs with an Experiencer dative obligatory clitic: *a-i plăcea* ‘like’, *a-i displăcea* ‘dislike’, *a-i prii* ‘be good for’, *a-i repugna* ‘loathe’, *a-i tihni* ‘enjoy’ (11b):

- (11) a. Nu dispera, vom găsi soluții!
‘Do not despair, we will find solutions!’
- b. Vacanța nu-i tihnește
holiday.DEF not=CL.DAT.3SG enjoys
‘He is not enjoying his holiday’

- obligatory reflexive verbs that do not allow dative personal clitics: *a se căi* ‘repent’, *a se sfi* ‘feel shy’, *a se sinchisi* ‘care’, *a se teme* ‘fear’ (12a) and obligatory reflexive verbs, that take personal dative clitics *a i se urî* ‘have enough of something’, *a i se face* ‘feel like doing something; become’ (12b):

- (12) a. El s-a sfiit să vorbească despre asta
‘He scrupled to talk about this’
- b. (Non-Standard) Mariei i s-a făcut de plimbare
‘Maria feels like taking a walk’

The intransitive verbs *a-i păsa* ‘care’, *a-i arde* ‘have a desire’, obligatory reflexive verbs which take dative personal clitics (13b), and the structure *a-i părea bine / rău* ‘feel happy / sorry’ have an empty subject position:

- (13) a. Lui Ion îi pasă de studenți
LUI.DAT Ion.DAT CL.DAT.3SG cares for students
‘Ion cares for students’
- b. I s-a urât de școală
CL.DAT.3SG CL.REFL.3SG=has been fed up with school
‘He is fed up with school’

Certain psych-verbs allow parallel syntactic patterns (see **4a-b**). The object of a psych-verb may become subject, and the subject in the original structure may show up as a prepositional object (*psych-movement*, Crystal 2008: 396).

H Diachronically, some psych-verbs underwent some changes in the syntactic regime. There are verbs which in Old Romanian take an indirect object (14a-c) and in the following centuries as also in Contemporary Romanian they take a direct or a prepositional object – *a se bucura* ‘be happy’, *a se minuna* ‘be surprised’, *a iubi* ‘love’, *a se supăra* ‘become angry’:

- (14) a. **Bucurați** -vă **lui dumnezeu!** (*Psaltirea Hurmuzaki*)
 be happy.IMP.2PL=CL.REFL.2PL LUI.DAT God.DAT
 ‘Be happy to God!’
- b. **Să se minunează tăriei Domnului**
 SĂ_{SUBJ} CL.REFL.3SG wonder.SUBJ.3SG strength.DEF.GEN God.GEN
 ‘Wonder of God’s strength’
- c. **Nu iubi hicleanilor** (*Psaltirea Hurmuzaki*)
 not love.IMP.2SG cunning.DEF.DAT.PL
 ‘Do not love the cunning ones’
- d. **Li să supărase cu Ștefan Vodă** (Ureche)
 CL.DAT.3PL CL.REFL.3PL be angry.3PL with Ștefan Vodă
 ‘They had become angry with Ștefan the Great’

3.3.3.3 Certain mental states can be expressed compositionally, in stative or dynamic structures with the verb *a fi* ‘be’ or the verb *a se face* ‘feel’ + an abstract nominal (denoting a state) + Experiencer (possessive object): *a-i fi / a i se face teamă / frică / groază* ‘be / become afraid’, *a-i fi / a i se face rușine* ‘be / become ashamed’, *a-i fi / a i se face milă* ‘feel pity’, *a-i fi / a i se face dor* ‘miss’ (see **III.1.9.1.2**;

III.4.4.3) Some of these structures have a reflexive counterpart:

- (15) a. **Ei îi este teamă** de fulgere
 her.DAT CL.DAT.3MSG is fear of thunders
 ‘She fears the thunders’
- b. **Ea se teme** de fulgere
 she CL.REFL.3SG fears of thunders
 ‘She fears the thunders’
- (16) a. **Lui îi este / i se face rușine**
 him.DAT CL.DAT.3MSG is / CL.DAT.3MSG CL.REFL.3SG does shame
 ‘He is ashamed’
- b. **El se rușinează**
 he CL.REFL.3SG is ashamed
 ‘He is ashamed’

H These structures were compared to an old Latin pattern – the dative with *esse* – where possession was expressed by the verb *esse* + dative, in a configuration equivalent with the pattern *habeo* + nominative (Manoliu-Manea 1977: 76, Manea 2001: 76). The configuration with the dative Experiencer and the feeling/the state in nominative is attested in Latin: *Mihi est pudor* (Manoliu-Manea 1977: 76-7).

C In French, Spanish and Italian, the pattern has a correspondent with the verb *have*: Fr. *J’ai peur*, Sp. *El tiene miedo*, It. *Tu hai paura*.